

[Mr. Stuart Baker to whom the eggs were sent for identification writes as follows:—

'The eggs taken during May in the Laccadives by Mr. F. N. Betts are undoubtedly those of the Indian Sooty Tern (*Sterna fuscata infusata*) and are all of the same species; the largest and smallest of the 4 eggs sent come well within my *maxima* and *minima* measurements. The eggs of this bird vary in the most extraordinary way in colouration and very greatly in size. Hume found Sooty Terns breeding in the Laccadives in February when there were well grown chicks as well as hardset eggs and from this we could infer that one egg laying season lasted from December to February. Now it is interesting to have a second laying season recorded for May. Although we have no doubt ourselves that the eggs belong to our Indian form, it would be desirable to get some specimens of the birds to confirm this'.—EDS.]

## XXI.—MIGRATION ROUTES OF GEESE.

Perhaps the following information may be worth while placing on record. Over the village of Dambuk in the Sadiya Frontier Tract lies what must be in Assam one of the chief migration routes of Geese on their way to and from their breeding grounds. I was twice lucky enough to see this migration flight, in 1934 and again in 1936. It appears to start as early as the middle of January, and goes on until the end of March. The beginning and middle of March seem to be the peak periods for the northward migration. Dambuk lies right at the foot of the Hymalayan foothills which rise to between 5,000 ft. and 6,000 ft. immediately behind the village, gradually rising still higher as one goes further north; nothing but a jumbled mass of mountains. The valley of the Dibang river is some little distance to the east, whilst that of the Dihang (Brahmaputra) is roughly thirty miles to the west.

In 1934 I was at the village for the first week of March, and from about 4 o'clock in the afternoon every day until late at night gaggle after gaggle of geese appeared at intervals of about fifteen minutes from the south and south-west, flying at an altitude of about 4,000 ft. to disappear over the saddles in the hills towards the north behind the village. Their 'honking' sounded very melancholy as if they did not relish the thought of the inhospitable country over which they had to fly for there is nowhere en route where they could possibly alight.

Thousands of birds must have passed over each day I was there and when one woke up during the night the birds could still be heard going over.

Apparently there must be at the sources of the Dibang on the Great Snow Range some very convenient passes which the birds make regular use of. By far the bigger valley is that of the Dihang where my headquarters were at that time; but not a single goose ever went north by this route. I toured along the foot hills for a hundred miles during several migrating seasons; but never

anywhere else did I see even one per cent of the number of birds going north that I saw at Dambuk.

In 1936 I was there from the 11th to the 13th of January; but the migration had evidently only just started and very few gaggles were seen. On the average only two or three gaggles of 25 to 30 birds each were passing northwards each day I was there. The birds were at too great a height for even a guess at their species. Dambuk is, I should mention, some 25 miles or more from the nearest point where geese are usually found and there is dense jungle between.

This migration route appears to be a very old and well established one, for the Abors have a legend that on their northward flight the birds are advancing with war cries to make war on the Musk Deer, whilst when they return they come with shouts of victory after successful combat! Unfortunately I have never been able to see the southward migration.

GAUHATI,

KAMRUP DISTRICT,

ASSAM.

October 16, 1938.

R. E. PARSONS.

*Indian Police.*

## XXII.—COTTON TEAL (*NETTOPUS COROMANDELIANUS*) AT NASIK

This bird was a single female (no others were seen) and was shot on Lake Beale, near Ghoti, about 20 miles South West of Nasik, on January 2nd. I regret the skin was not preserved, but a careful examination was made, in comparison with the description and illustration found in *Game Birds of India* by Stuart-Baker, and there is no doubt whatsoever as to the identification.

NASIK.

C. J. RAE.

January 3, 1939.

## XXIII.—‘FISH OF GREAT AGE’.

(Reprinted from the ‘Field’).

SIR,—With reference to the above article by Mr. T. C. Bridges, in the *Field* of October 22nd, it is worthy of interest that the majority of modern ichthyologists appear to be of the opinion that ‘centenarian’ carp are non-existent; that, in fact, they never have existed. According to the *Fishing Gazette* of May 25th, 1935, a German scientist, Professor Rochner, who has studied carp for many years, states that they ‘live twenty-five to thirty years only. The ancient carp of Fontainebleau are a legend . . . for the ponds there were emptied in 1789, in 1825, and again during the Commune. The monster carp there, 90 centimetres long and 60 in girth, is only twenty-five years old.’

In his *History of Fishes* (pages 425-6), Mr. J. R. Norman quotes Dr. Regan’s comment that the statements concerning most of the